

BIRTH OF STYLES

Where Do Fashion Designers Get Their Ideas?—From Paintings, a Bit of Architecture or maybe a Current News Event



This is another interview with Herschel, well-known costume designer of the Twentieth Century-Fox Studios.

BY ALICE L. THIDESLEY

Herschel first observed the recurring cycles when studying architecture in school.

"Let's begin with classic Greek archaic art, from 700 B. C. to 500 B. C.," he suggested, turning over a leather-bound notebook full of neat notes in script, illustrated by sketches and photographs.

"We find it stylized. A sense of design came before anything else. In 'Birth of Venus,' a fragment of art of this period, Venus is rising from her tub while two figures in draperies make ready to receive her with towels. The drapery has rhythm, you notice, but it isn't natural. There is nothing real about it. Art was used to symbolize the spirit; it had nothing to do with nature.

"The Greek midperiod of art, however, went in for beauty of form; the figures were all natural and beautiful. That was the high point.

"The third period of Greek art was the ornate, where the hair on the statues was snaky, and the drapery flamboyant.

"In the earliest architecture, everything was done for a purpose. The doorway of the early Egyptians was made of heavy beam supported on slanting poles. They didn't know that an upright could stand alone. The Greeks modified this doorway with an arch, having discovered that they could fill in the space

"Michael Angelo's early work was glorious, but later he began to elaborate and became ornate. His figures were more than heroic in size, his angels had a wing spread of twenty-five feet and so on.

"As with architecture, so with interior decoration. At first paintings were part of a building; they were there to ornament a wall as murals, not in frames. A statue was there to support something, a column, an archway in frames. Nothing was done without a reason. When bare walls were transformed with beautiful paintings, we advanced; when these were succeeded with ornate trims, we went back.

"As a rule, clothes and architecture go hand in hand, but this is not always true.

"Beautiful, simple Colonial houses in America were peopled with beautiful, simple colonially garbed persons; while at the turn of this century, the over-decorated, hideous rooms full of beaded portieres, cozy corners, peacock feathers, lace curtains and heavily carved and ornamented furniture, were reflected in the ugly clothes worn by the women: Wasp waists, leg o' mutton sleeves, high button shoes, merry widow hats, rolls of false hair, high-boned collars and so on.

"Now that air travel has brought our neighbors so close, fashions all over the world are more similar than they once were, but when Marie Antoinette and George Washington were contemporaries, what was worn in France was not the same thing worn in America.

"Over there, fashions had grown so flamboyant that women actually wore small models of ships in their hair that stood four feet high, so high that holes had to be cut above doorways so that the wearers could pass from room to room. Crinolines and extravagant draperies, brocaded and jeweled gowns, every exotic touch imaginable, such as diamonds set into the heels of slippers and gloves incrustated with emeralds, were to be found in French court circles.

"Over here, owing perhaps to pioneering limitations, everything was as simple as possible. Men and women no longer wore wigs, but powdered their own hair and arranged it in perukes for men and coils or braids for women. Men wore broadcloth, women plain crossed bands



Typical of the Renaissance period is this gown worn by Loretta Young. It is of black velvet and taffeta with heavily corded seams

or lace collars as trims for their simple gowns."



and gain beauty, but later more rococo artists used ornamentation above arches and made the mistake later repeated in Victorian days, when gingerbread trims were plastered wherever there was a vacant space.

Chicken with Beer Sauce Delights Eastern Gourmets

Many housewives who pattern their cooking after dishes they have enjoyed in first-class hotels have learned that one of the great secrets of culinary mastery lies in sauces. They may purchase the same quality of raw foods as are placed at the chef's disposal, but if that certain sauce is missing, they do not quite achieve the required result. Sauces have inspired artists to heights of expression in days when dining was a fine art and they are still exalted by a smaller group of epicures who appreciate good food today.

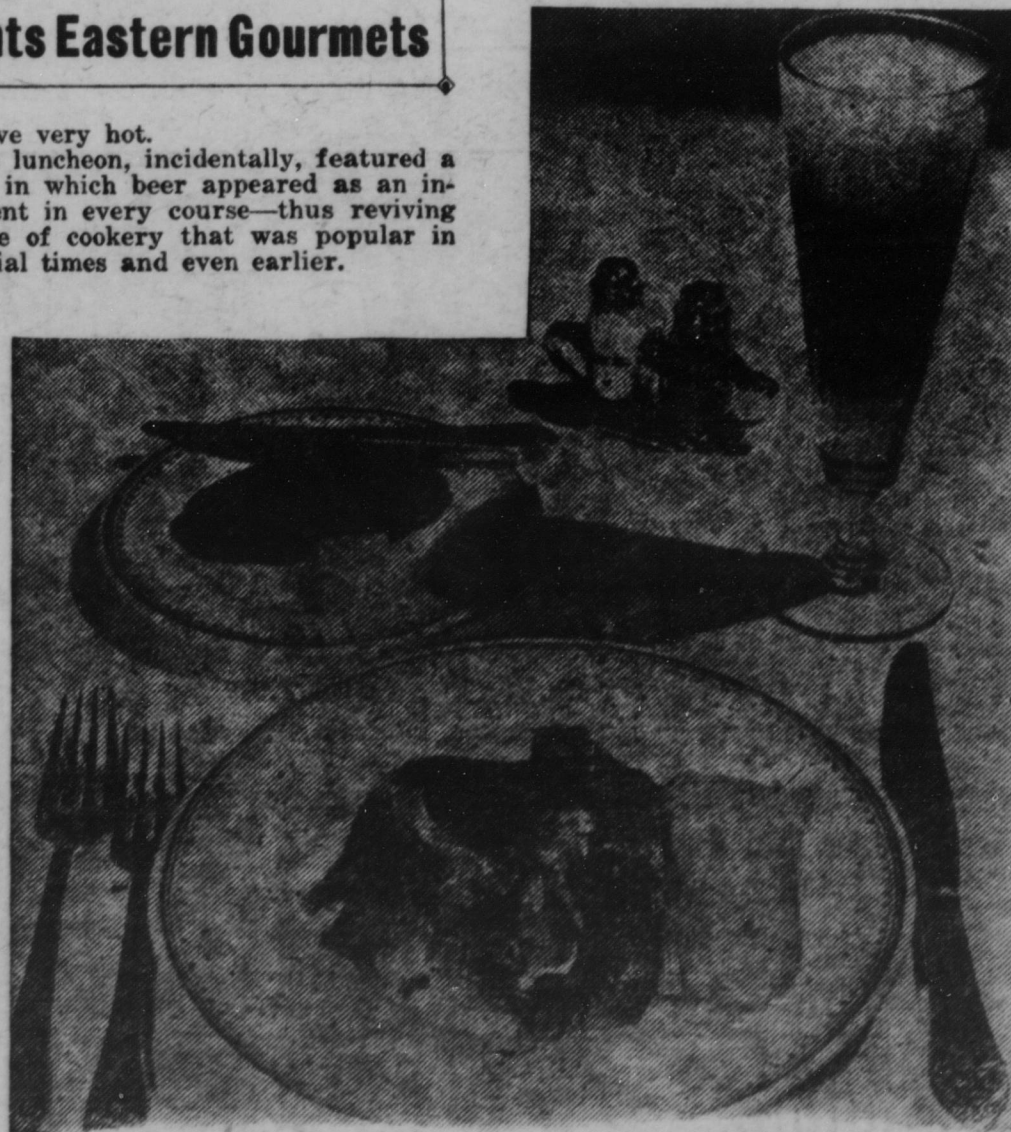
Recently a group of Eastern connoisseurs of cookery gathered in one of New York's finest hotels and literally smacked their lips over a dish of braised chicken that was unusually delightful. Pressing for information about the recipe, they learned that one of the ingredients was beer—the same refreshing beverage of moderation they were enjoying with their luncheon. The recipe, they learned, was contributed by a famous hotel man for Helen Watts Schreiber's new booklet, "It's Smart to Serve Beer," just published by the United Brewers Industrial Foundation, and here it is:

Take a nice chicken of 7 pounds, cleaned and ready to roast and well-seasoned. Place it in a special deep braise pan with 2 carrots and 2 onions sliced. Add some lard and braise for 1 hour and 30 minutes in medium-hot oven, basting from time to time with the pan grease.

When ready, remove the capon and 2/3 of the pan grease. Add 3 tablespoons of flour and 4 cups of beer. Put the capon back in the braise pan. Braise again for 20 minutes.

Dress the capon; strain the sauce; rectify seasoning.

Serve very hot. The luncheon, incidentally, featured a menu in which beer appeared as an ingredient in every course—thus reviving a type of cookery that was popular in Colonial times and even earlier.



Braised chicken prepared with beer, with beer-smothered celery, as served at a famous New York hotel. The roll shown here also contains beer.